

REMARKS

The Official Action of September 28, 2005, and the prior art cited and relied upon therein have been carefully studied. The claims in the application are now claims 25-32 only, and these claims should be allowable consistent with what is stated in the Official Action. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests favorable consideration and early formal allowance.

Applicant filed replacement drawings for the present application as part of the Preliminary Amendment of August 30, 2004. As such drawings have not been objected to, applicant understands that they have been accepted and entered.

Claims 14-19 and 22-24 have been rejected under Section 102 as anticipated by Smith, 328350. Claims 14-23 have been rejected as obvious under Section 103 from Emeric 403928 in view of Schoch 689232 and Tulley 672499.

While applicant does not necessarily agree with either of these rejections, they need not be addressed at the present time in view of the deletion of claims 14-24, without prejudice to applicant's rights to pursue such claims or similar claims in a continuing application without any penalty whatsoever, if applicant chooses to do so, in which case applicant would rely on 35 USC 120.

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Amd. dated December 27, 2005
Reply to Office Action of September 28, 2005


Claims 25-32 have been allowed. As claim 25 was a dependent claim, it has now been redrafted in independent form. Applicant understands that these claims are deemed by the PTO to define novel and non-obvious subject matter under Sections 102 and 103, and to otherwise meet all requirements for patentability.

The prior art documents cited but not applied by the PTO have been noted, along with the implication that such documents are deemed by the PTO to be insufficiently material to warrant their application against any of applicant's claims.

Applicant believes that all issues raised in the Official Action have been addressed above in a manner which should lead to patentability of applicant's claims. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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